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20 March 1956

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: Latest Developments of the "Anti-Stalin" Trend in  
International Communism; Interpretation and possible  
Exploitation

1. The purpose of this memorandum is to suggest an interpretation of the latest events in the Soviet Union and of their impact upon international communism (paras. 2-5) and to recommend appropriate political warfare measures (paras. 6-9). The situation is very fluid, changing from day to day, if not from hour to hour, and information as yet available is obviously quite incomplete. The analysis presented here can therefore only be tactical, speculative and subject to further revisions. However, the very fluidity of the situation appears to call for an immediate interpretation, if only as a working hypothesis, since the opportunities for action which the situation offers might diminish or disappear, once the visibly ruffled communist camp has a chance to settle.

#### INTERPRETATION

2. Since the opening of the 20th CPSU Congress events in the Soviet Union have been increasingly forcing Khrushchev's hand far beyond his original intentions. Originally, he intended to use the Party Congress mainly to confirm the policy he had followed ever since he replaced Malenkov in February, 1955, and to consolidate his own personal position. In his opening speech, he deviated from certain tenets of Stalinism, but with a show of reluctance and without attacking the dead

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leader personally. Mikoyan's speech went much farther and apparently aroused serious opposition - at least below the surface of the Congress. The growth of this opposition forced Khrushchev to make his second, "secret" speech.

3. We do not yet know whether Khrushchev succeeded in rallying the 1600 Congress delegates to his side by his long and passionate indictment of Stalin. In any case, he found it necessary a few days later to order mass meetings of the 8 million rank-and-file party members throughout the Soviet Union in order to acquaint them with the gist of his indictment. The riots in Georgia, to judge from newspaper and radio reports thus far received, appear to have been well organized and led as is indicated by the rather sophisticated reflection of the incidents in the Tiflis party newspaper, by the request to Chinese Marshal Chu-Teh to appear in their meeting and by other signs of rather clever political planning. Current reports that Marshals Voroshilov and Sokolovsky have gone to Tiflis, that travel and communications have been restricted, that some of the Volga radio stations have gone off the air, etc., add to the impression that this is more serious than a purely sentimental and localized reaction of the Georgians against the vilification of their most famous fellow-countrymen.

4. There is not yet any reason to expect an overthrow of Soviet rule in the foreseeable future. However, far-reaching changes in the top personnel, possibly including Khrushchev himself, and growing ascendancy of the military leaders, if not an outright "Napoleonic"



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military dictatorship, are definitely conceivable. The international Communist movement outside the Soviet Union is obviously also severely shaken.

5. Khrushchev's position appears to have deteriorated, though presumably not yet beyond repair, as a result of his failure to anticipate the full consequences of his anti-Stalin moves. This failure may be attributed to the fact that Khrushchev is primarily a successful manager of the bureaucratic hierarchy which rules party and economic life, and is neither a true revolutionary nor a profound political or ideological thinker. His impetuosity and self-confidence may have led him to overlook or underestimate such considerations as:

a. It is impossible to remove a few isolated stones from the brittle, "monolithic" structure of totalitarian doctrine without endangering the entire system.

b. By denying Stalin's much-vaunted "infallibility", he cast doubt on the "infallibility" of the Party itself.

c. Stalin's "father image" satisfied a profound psychological need of the average Russian who is deeply shocked that this image, laboriously built up for almost 30 years, is suddenly and violently shattered.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

6. Whether the recent events mark the "Thermidor" of the Russian revolution or a return from Stalinism to Leninism, they may portend additional dangers to our security as a result of "Napoleonic" military ventures or of increased Soviet-Communist initiatives in the foreign

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policy and economic fields. We therefore recommend that political and propaganda action be taken before the situation in the Soviet Union and in the international communist movement has a chance to stabilize. Such action, might take the form of a pincers movement, with one "white" and one "black" jaw. The objective of both would be to exacerbate existing dissensions and to advance the "debunking" of the Stalin myth.

7. The "white jaw" of the proposed pincers could center in a top-level policy statement, to be set forth either by the President, or by Congress in a joint resolution, or by an appropriate inter-allied body, such as the Atlantic Council. In view of the deep impact of these events upon Europe, we would suggest the last as the most effective channel, if it is diplomatically feasible. Use of the one would presumably not exclude use of the others, if properly timed and coordinated. The themes dramatically proclaimed by such a statement would then have to be further developed, repeated and disseminated by all available communications media of the Western World.

8. The gist of such an overt political offensive, which would also serve as guidance to our diplomacy, should be: "How the Communist leaders themselves admit the evils of dictatorship, admit that Stalin was just as power-mad and irresponsible as Hitler, killed millions of innocent victims, almost lost the war and committed innumerable other crimes and blunders. All the Communist claims to a 'Scientific foundation' of their policy, and to virtual infallibility as a model for the rest of mankind, thereby collapse, deflated by confessions of Stalin's successors themselves. However, the present leaders of the CPSU and



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of Communist Parties everywhere cannot escape responsibility for this reign of terror and crime simply by blaming everything on two dead men, Stalin and Beria. Khrushchev and the others who are now the Communist Party's 'collective despots' played very important and responsible roles, already in the days of Stalin. We deeply sympathize with the plight of the populations of the Soviet Union but, true to the principle of non-interference, we cannot tell them how they should call Stalin's surviving accomplices to account or demand reparations for the evil he wrought. If, however, the communist leaders expect the Western world to accept their statements that they have broken with the sordid and violent traditions of Stalin's reign, they must do much more than merely denounce the dead. First and foremost, they must enable the free world to believe in their good faith by beginning to fulfill the pledges in international affairs which Stalin broke. Especially they must honor the promises of free self-determination for all the peoples who have come under communist rule by force."

9. The line to be taken by the "black" pincer will require careful consideration. It would probably involve a multi-pronged series of approaches, not all necessarily consistent. For example, we suggest that the main thrust might be the denunciation of the 20th Congress line as a betrayal of true Communism, as a hateful and dangerous "Thermidor". At the same time it might excoriate the "return to Leninism" as fraudulent, insincere and opportunistic. It might publish compromising documents (real or fake) to blacken Stalin along lines avoided at the Party Congress,

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at the same time suggesting that the Communist leaders had deliberately thrown up a smoke screen around the ultimate perfidy of the dead tyrant. This campaign should obviously be carried out only through totally clandestine and non-attributable assets. Elements of the "homeless left" might be utilized in this context. The temporary state of confusion in communist ranks may permit devices which could not be used in a more static situation. For instance, a <sup>2</sup>block radio station near the Turkish border, starting operations within the next few weeks, might well be accepted even by listeners inside the USSR as "the voice of Stalinist Georgia". National documents along the above lines could also be circulated among Communist Party members who might accept them as bona fide expression of dissension within the party ranks. Numerous additional opportunities will unquestionably emerge if we closely follow developments, not only inside the Soviet Union, but inside the Communist Parties of China, the satellites and the Free World.

  
Chief, SRS/DDI

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